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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: November 24, 1957.

SUBJECT: Exchange of Views.

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary John Foster Dulles  
German Foreign Minister von Brentano  
Heinz L. Krekeler, German Ambassador  
Ambassador Herbert Blankenhorn, Permanent Representative  
North Atlantic Council  
Ambassador David K. E. Bruce  
C. Burke Elbrick, Assistant Secretary of State  
Mr. Weber (Interpreter)

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Brentano said that he was grateful to have another opportunity to talk with the Secretary. He said that he and Blankenhorn would report to Adenauer on the matters discussed here and he was sure they could clarify certain questions which had been uppermost in Chancellor's mind.

He said that there were three matters particularly which he would like to refer to again. The first concerned political consultation in the North Atlantic Council. Unfortunately, the report of the Three Wise Men did not produce results commensurate with our expectations. The second matter concerned the proposal made by M. Pineau, with which Brentano agreed, to establish a European research community. He hoped that the United States would be willing to assist and support such a project and exchange experiences with the Europeans. He had noticed, during yesterday's conversations, a reference to cooperation on a bilateral basis under the terms of a "144 B Agreement". He did not know what this meant. The third matter which he wished to discuss concerned military questions. Brentano emphasized he was merely inquiring concerning our views on the forthcoming NATO Meeting and was not pressing us to make decisions on these matters.

The Secretary said he had very little to add to what he had already said on the subject of consultation. He referred to the fact that consultation in the North Atlantic Council had improved greatly over the past year and we had made a great effort to keep our Permanent Representative adequately informed. He felt that in some

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cases it might be preferable to discuss certain matters with our NATO allies here in Washington in the interest of speed and accuracy. He referred to the fact that some nations do not want all problems discussed in the North Atlantic Council and, perhaps, it was better not to do so. He referred particularly to Cyprus in this connection and also to important developments in North Africa which the French apparently did not wish to discuss. When quick decisions are necessary, it would be impracticable to discuss them in NATO. All of these matters must be governed by the rule of reason.

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Blankenhorn, saying that he would like to express Chancellor Adenauer's views, said that the Chancellor feels that there has been too little consultation on important actions which might involve the whole alliance. He spoke specifically of the Syrian crisis and the matter of the arms lift to Jordan. He felt certain moves of this nature could easily provoke a large crisis which would involve Germany. The Secretary interrupted to say that while we recognize the interest of our allies in such matters, we frequently must act quickly in order to be effective. This was so in the case of Jordan; if we had not delivered arms within a few hours, King Hussein might have been deposed. We had moved the Sixth Fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean for the same purpose and had approached Israel to request that it cooperate in desisting from any intervention or border raids against Jordan. These decisions had been taken in a matter of a very few hours and we could not have saved the situation if we had no possibility of quick action. If we were not in a position to act quickly, a situation might easily develop which could involve all our NATO partners in war. Those partners should be thankful, therefore, that we saved the situation in this case. Instead, all we get is criticism. The NATO allies, he said, would be doomed if the United States were not in a position to act quickly and decisively.

Blankenhorn tried to explain that Germany did not intend in any way to tie the hands of the United States in such matters and that the Chancellor's suggestion was directed mainly at the question of informing the NATO allies of the reasons for our actions. This would not require prior consultation, but could be done subsequently. He felt that this was necessary in order that the NATO partners could be in a position to support the United States. For example, Turkey was involved in the Syrian situation and if a crisis had developed, Germany would have been involved as a NATO partner. Therefore, the German Government would like to be better informed regarding our motives and our actions.

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The Secretary said we probably can do more to keep our allies informed and we are prepared to do so in an effort to make the alliance a more effective instrument. In some cases, however, even officers of the United States Government are not brought into the picture, for various reasons. In such cases, it would be unrealistic to expect us to do more for our NATO partners. Blankenhorn said the United States is the great leader of the North Atlantic Alliance and that it is important that the representative of the United States in the North Atlantic Council be able to present the views and policies of his Government. The Secretary said we must apply the rule of reason in such matters. He said that an alliance, to be effective, must be a blend of three elements: consultation, trust, and capacity for action. No one of these three elements should be present in excess. The Secretary described the very great amount of consultation which must take place within the United States Government itself before any action can be agreed. To add to this load of consultation could be counter-productive. Blankenhorn said if the NATO allies are to have confidence in the United States they must be informed of U.S. policy. The Secretary said that was a serious statement and repeated that there are some cases where our allies must trust the United States. If our partners distrust our motives, that in itself should be discussed in the North Atlantic Council. In many cases, the Secretary said, there may be real security reasons for taking unusual precautions to avoid possible leaks. NATO must give some leeway to those having the principal responsibility of meeting the threat.

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The Secretary said that Khrushchev is an unpredictable and impetuous individual and we can expect constant probing by the Soviets in various quarters. These probings must be met by complete determination by the North Atlantic Alliance. If the Soviets should receive the impression that the United States is hesitant to respond to these probings, they would multiply around the world. Blankenhorn said that inadequate consultation sometimes gives rise to misunderstandings. He understood why there might be obstacles to such consultation in certain cases, but he felt that some information was necessary even though it might not be given in detail.

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The Secretary said that other governments could do more in this field also and he cited the recent Netherlands-Australia declaration regarding New Guinea, and United Kingdom actions with respect to the Arabian Peninsula. Blankenhorn said these matters are not of the same importance as those involving the United States. The Secretary disagreed, saying that actions in the Arabian Peninsula affect King Saud, who is the key to the Middle Eastern situation.

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The Secretary said he was not qualified to talk about technical matters such as the question of basic research exchanges and he thought this matter should be taken up through diplomatic channels.

Brentano then referred to the question of the custody of nuclear weapons and asked whether, in the event a NATO stockpile is established, SACEUR would have such custody. The Secretary said this matter is being studied by the Joint Chiefs of Staff now and he could not give Brentano an answer today. He said the problem is divided into two parts. The first part concerns the possession of weapons. The present atomic legislation provides that the United States must retain technical possession in peacetime and that, in an emergency, the President could make weapons available to our allies. The second question concerns the use of these weapons, a matter which has never actually been settled by NATO. The NATO paper, MC-48, approached the problem, but made no attempt to solve it, as it could not envisage all possible contingencies. As for our own forces, commanders have the duty to repel a direct attack on them by all possible means. With that exception, no authority to use nuclear weapons resides in any officer except the President. In the event of attack, no local commander has the authority to drop bombs on Moscow. The Secretary thought it would be unwise to define the procedures required to meet all contingencies, saying it would be very dangerous if the Soviet knew, for example, that one NATO division would reply with nuclear weapons in the event of attack and another would not. He said the authority to use weapons from the NATO stockpile should be vested in General Norstad, with which Brentano agreed.

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Brentano asked whether all NATO forces are expected to have the same strength and to reply in the same way in the event of attack. He said it was not Germany's wish particularly to possess atomic weapons, but he pointed out that any inequality in equipment presents a serious problem and he asked whether all forces are expected to have the same capabilities. The Secretary said he did not know whether it was possible even to have all U.S. forces equipped in the same way. However, in the event of an attack on the NATO area we would consider it a signal for general war, and would make weapons available to our allies and would launch our Strategic Air Command. It might be possible that the attack would be a local probing action not involving Soviet forces; if Soviet forces are involved, however, this would result in general war.

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The Secretary concluded by saying that we would have suggestions to make at the December meeting regarding an atomic stockpile for NATO. Before we can finalize such suggestions, however, we must await the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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